

[REDACTED]

FOI 578/24-25

14 April 2025

[REDACTED]

I refer to your email dated 1st April 2025 in which you requested information regarding the offence of paying for the sex in Northern Ireland. Your request has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act creates rights of access for any person making a request for information to a public authority. The rights of access are twofold. First, to be informed by the public authority if it holds information of the description specified in the request, and if that is the case, secondly, to be provided with that information. These rights are subject to important limitations, which are designed to achieve a proper balance between the right to know and considerations of law and policy in the broader public interest.

You had asked the following:

“Could you advise on the number of people (if any) who have been prosecuted for paying for sex in Northern Ireland since the law changed making it illegal in June 2015?”

In response, please be advised that for the period 1 June 2015 to 31 March 2025, 22 prosecution decisions were issued in respect of the offence of paying for sex, 14 of which were summary prosecutions and 8 indictable prosecutions.

For the period 1 June 2015 to 31 March 2025, 15 prosecution decisions were issued in respect of the offence of attempting to pay for sex, 4 of which were summary prosecutions and 11 indictable prosecutions.

These figures include suspects who may have been prosecuted for both of the above offences.

Please note that the relevant offences are as follows:

Decision Offence Code Description	Decision Offence Legislation
PAYING FOR THE SEXUAL SERVICES OF A PERSON (In force from 1 June 2015)	Article 64A(1)(a) of The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008
ATTEMPTING TO PAY FOR SEXUAL SERVICES OF A PERSON	Article 64A of the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008 and Article 3(1) of the Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (NI) Order 1983
PAYING FOR SEXUAL SERVICES OF A PERSON	Article 64A of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review in accordance with our review procedure. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of this response and you can do so by writing to the Head of Policy and Information, Public Prosecution Service, Belfast Chambers, 93 Chichester Street, BELFAST, BT1 3JR or alternatively by sending an e-mail to info@ppsni.gov.uk. You should state the grounds on which you are requesting the review.

Alternatively, you may wish to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Information Management Team
Public Prosecution Service